Hospital update

ROYAL BOROUGH: An adults, children and health overview and scrutiny panel was set to meet last night (Wednesday).

Panel members were due to be updated on work taking place on Heatherwood Hospital in Ascot.

An update was also due on actions taken following a Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman report, which found the council did not properly care for an elderly man who was split apart from his wife of 59 years.

Last shot to save club which needs new home

Bray/ Holyport: Maidenhead Target Shooting Club must leave Braywick site

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Speed read...

A 114-year-old shooting club is fighting for its life against a decision by the Royal Borough to decline its application to relocate in Holyport. Concerns include the effect on the greenbelt and on horses.

Maidenhead Target Shooting Club is appealing to save its shooting range after an application to relocate to greenbelt land was rejected by the council.

The club, founded in 1906, was located at Braywick Park for more than 50 years. However, due to plans to develop the new home for Forest Bridge School on this site, the club had to move.

It is now looking to set up on Stroud Farm field, west of Oak Tree Farm in Gays Lane – land which is on the greenbelt.

Plans include a car park, clubhouse, toilets and shooting stands with access via Green Lane.

The club made the application in December 2018, which was refused in October 2019.

It has now launched an appeal against the Royal Borough's decision, to be heard at a virtual hearing on November 25.

When the club first made its planning application, it was opposed by members of the community and parish councillors.

One objection was that the number of parking spaces the club is looking to include will not be sufficient to accommodate the club's number of members.

However, chairman Martin Bicknell insisted the club has proved that the proposed car park would be more than large enough, pointing out that its members 'do not descend all at once'.

He also rebutted concerns about the disturbance to horses in the area, being close to a bridle path.

He said that, during an acoustic survey of the site, an attending member of the council commented that she could hear bird song above the sound of the rifles.

"When we were in Braywick Park, many people didn't even know we were there. We're not an intrusive club," Mr Bicknell said.

The club claims to have looked carefully at all the issues surrounding the proposed move, running traffic surveys and hiring its own planning consultants.

According to Mr Bicknell, the consultants agreed with the view that an outdoor sporting club is 'an appropriate change of use' for greenbelt land.

The clubhouse, for example, would be 'no taller than the barn' and shooting activities would be shielded by hedges, the club claims.

"There's a limited amount of land available – we've looked long and hard," said Mr Bicknell.

"There's nothing much left to save the club. This is our last hurrah. If it doesn't work out, Maidenhead will lose an old institution."

Bray Parish Council will be represented at the virtual hearing in November, in opposition to the appeal.

Ramblers mark anniversary of walk

Ramblers join Theresa May and her husband Sir Philip at the 20th anniversary of the Millennium Walk.

MAIDENHEAD: The Millennium Walk celebrated its 20th anniversary in almost traditional style on Sunday, September 20, covering half its usual route.

The walk is a cross-country ramble from Hurley to Maidenhead Riverside which connects at both ends with the Thames Path National Trail.

This project was created by Maidenhead Civic Society (MCS) and East Berks Ramblers (EBRA) to celebrate the Millennium.

Despite the challenges thrown up by COVID-19, the event organisers decided to go ahead with the walk this year too, armed with advice from Sport England.

The occasion was marked by a walk from Pinkneys Green to Maidenhead Riverside, covering half the overall route.

The walkers assembled on National Trust land opposite the Scout Hut on Pinkneys Green where they were joined by Theresa May and her husband Sir Philip.

After a short address on social distancing and safety, the walkers set off, led by Mrs May.

With special permission from the Royal Borough, the walkers were able to cross the East Field of Battlemead Common with its views of Cliveden.